

EXPLORATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COPING STRATEGIES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOLLOWING FLOOD DISASTERS AT MALIKUSSALEH UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Flood disasters not only cause physical and material losses but also have significant psychological impacts on survivors, including university students. This study aimed to explore Islamic religious coping strategies among students following flood disasters at Malikussaleh University. The study employed a qualitative approach using a phenomenological research design. Five university students were selected through purposive sampling as participants. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews adapted from the Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE), observations, and document analysis, and were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that students employed five interrelated forms of religious coping strategies: (1) Meaning-making, by interpreting the flood as a test and divine decree from Allah; (2) Gaining control, through an active partnership between maximum personal effort (ikhtiar) and tawakkal (trust in Allah); (3) Seeking comfort, by engaging in religious practices such as shalat (prayer), dhikr (remembrance of Allah), and personal supplication (dua); (4) Developing intimacy, by utilizing both spiritual and practical support from the university's religious community; and (5) Life transformation, characterized by increased patience, gratitude, and emotional regulation. The use of these coping strategies was influenced by the participants' level of faith and the availability of socio-religious support. The study concludes that Islamic religious coping functions as a multifaceted psychological coping mechanism by providing meaning, regulating emotions, strengthening social support, and fostering personal growth, thereby enhancing resilience and facilitating the psychological recovery of university students following flood disasters.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Coping, University Students, Flood Disaster, Malikussaleh University.*

INTRODUCTION

Flood disasters are catastrophic events that not only cause physical and material losses but also exert significant psychological impacts on affected individuals. These psychological consequences may include stress, anxiety, feelings of helplessness, trauma, and impairments in social and academic functioning, particularly among university students who are in a developmental transition period while simultaneously facing substantial academic demands (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). In times of crisis, individuals typically employ various coping strategies to adapt to stressful situations and restore psychological equilibrium (Lazarus &

Folkman, 1984). One of the most commonly adopted coping strategies in religious communities is religious coping (Pargament, 1997).

Religious coping refers to a form of psychological adaptation that utilizes religious beliefs, values, and spiritual practices to deal with life stressors and traumatic experiences. This process encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects associated with an individual's relationship with God and the spiritual interpretation of life events. Religious coping may involve practices such as prayer, dhikr (remembrance of Allah), reading the Qur'an, participating in religious activities, and seeking social support from religious communities. These strategies function as sources of meaning, self-regulation, emotional comfort, and social reinforcement when individuals encounter stressful circumstances (Pargament, 1997).

Theoretically, the concept of religious coping originates from the stress and coping theory proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which explains that individuals employ cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage internal and external demands perceived as exceeding their available resources. This framework was later expanded by Pargament (1997) through the concept of religious coping, positioning religion as a vital psychological resource for dealing with stress and life crises. According to Pargament, religious coping assists individuals in finding meaning, gaining a sense of control, obtaining spiritual support, and strengthening psychological resilience. Positive religious coping has consistently been associated with greater psychological well-being, whereas negative religious coping has been linked to increased psychological distress (Pargament et al., 1998).

Pargament (1997) conceptualized religious coping into several major dimensions, namely meaning, control, comfort, intimacy, and life transformation. The meaning dimension refers to individuals' efforts to interpret difficult experiences through a religious perspective. The control dimension concerns managing adversity through a combination of personal effort and surrender to God. The comfort dimension involves seeking emotional peace through worship and spiritual practices. The intimacy dimension emphasizes the importance of a close relationship with God and support from religious communities. Finally, the life transformation dimension refers to the positive personal changes that emerge following experiences of crisis or suffering (Pargament, 1997; Kurani, 2016).

Previous studies have demonstrated that religious coping plays an essential role in helping individuals cope with traumatic experiences and disasters. One of the foundational studies was conducted by Pargament, Smith, Koenig, and Perez (1998), who introduced the concepts of positive and negative religious coping and developed the Religious Coping Scale

RCOPE). Their findings indicated that positive religious coping—such as seeking spiritual support and maintaining a collaborative relationship with God—was associated with more adaptive psychological adjustment, whereas negative religious coping was related to higher levels of psychological distress (Pargament et al., 1998).

Several previous studies relevant to the present research provide a theoretical and empirical foundation that highlights the importance of examining religious coping in disaster contexts, particularly among university students.

First, the study by Pargament, Smith, Koenig, and Perez (1998), entitled *Patterns of Positive and Negative Religious Coping with Major Life Stressors*, serves as the principal theoretical foundation. Their research established the concepts of positive and negative religious coping and developed the RCOPE instrument. The study concluded that positive religious coping, such as seeking spiritual support and collaborating with God, was associated with better psychological outcomes, whereas negative religious coping, such as perceiving disasters as divine punishment, was associated with greater psychological distress. This research provides both the theoretical and operational framework for categorizing the religious coping strategies explored among students in the present study.

Second, Nurwanti's (2019) literature review, entitled *Religious Coping among Natural Disaster Survivors in Indonesia: A Literature Review*, systematically examined studies conducted in Indonesia. The review found that the majority of disaster survivors, who were predominantly Muslims, tended to adopt positive religious coping strategies such as *tawakkal* (trust in Allah), *patience (sabr)*, *gratitude (shukr)*, and increased engagement in religious worship. These findings provide culturally specific evidence supporting the assumption that Islamic values constitute an important source of psychological resilience among disaster survivors in Indonesia, thereby providing an important contextual basis for this study.

Third, a study focusing specifically on university students was conducted by Sari and Fadhilah (2021), entitled *Religious Coping Strategies and Academic Stress among Muslim University Students*. Their findings demonstrated that religious practices, including *shalat* (prayer), *supplication (dua)*, and *recitation of the Qur'an*, significantly helped students manage academic stress. Although the stressor examined differed from that of the present study (academic stress versus disaster-related stress), the findings remain highly relevant because they illustrate the adaptive mechanisms of religious coping among Muslim university students, which may also operate in response to more severe stressors such as flood disasters.

Fourth, the field study conducted by Akmal et al. (2023), entitled *The Role of Worship and Religious Communities in the Psychological Recovery of Flood Survivors in*

Lhokseumawe City, provides strong geographical and contextual relevance. Their qualitative findings revealed that collective religious worship and support from mosque communities played a crucial role in restoring survivors' sense of safety, meaning, and hope following flood disasters. These findings underscore the importance of the socio-religious intimacy dimension of religious coping, which also constitutes one of the primary focuses of the present study conducted within Malikussaleh University, located in the same disaster-prone region.

Therefore, the present study seeks to extend and contextualize previous research by specifically exploring the religious coping strategies employed by university students who experienced flood disasters in Aceh, with a particular focus on students at Malikussaleh University.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a phenomenological research design. A qualitative approach was selected because it is appropriate for obtaining an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences, perceptions, and Islamic religious coping strategies of university students affected by flood disasters, where the data are narrative and context-dependent (Moleong, 2021). A phenomenological design enables researchers to explore the lived experiences of participants and to understand how they perceive and assign meaning to a particular phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon under investigation was the use of Islamic religious coping strategies among university students following a flood disaster.

The research adopted an exploratory-descriptive qualitative design. It was exploratory because it sought to identify and understand the specific forms of Islamic religious coping strategies that emerged in response to flood disasters, particularly those that have not been comprehensively documented among students at Malikussaleh University (Bungin, 2020). At the same time, the study was descriptive, aiming to provide a systematic and detailed description of how these coping strategies were implemented, the factors influencing their use, and their role in managing psychological stress based on participants' lived experiences (Sukmadinata, 2019).

This research focused on the lived experiences of university students who survived the flood disaster at Malikussaleh University. The objective was to achieve a deep understanding of the phenomenon rather than to produce findings that could be generalized to a broader population. The selection of this design was based on the consideration that traumatic experiences and post-disaster religious practices constitute complex phenomena whose meanings, contexts, and processes can only be adequately understood through direct

interaction with participants.

The study was conducted at Malikussaleh University (UNIMAL), located on Jl. Cot Teungku Nie, Reuleut Timur, Muara Batu District, North Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. This location was purposively selected because it was among the areas most severely affected by the flash floods that occurred at the end of 2024. The disaster caused many students to lose their rented accommodations, personal belongings, and disrupted both their academic activities and psychological well-being (Kompas.com, 2024). The university environment therefore provided an appropriate setting for examining religious coping strategies among students who experienced similar post-disaster challenges.

The participants were active undergraduate students at Malikussaleh University who had been directly affected by the flash flood disaster in late 2024. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique in which individuals are chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. They were actively enrolled as students at Malikussaleh University during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.
2. They had experienced direct impacts of the flash flood disaster, including damage to their residence (boarding house or family home), loss of personal belongings, disruption of academic activities, or psychological distress.
3. They identified as Muslims, as the study specifically examined coping strategies within the framework of Islamic religious coping.
4. They voluntarily agreed to participate by signing an informed consent form and possessed sufficient communication skills to participate in an in-depth interview.

Based on these criteria, five participants were recruited. This number was considered adequate for a phenomenological qualitative study aimed at achieving data saturation and obtaining rich, in-depth information about the phenomenon rather than statistical generalization (Mason, 2010). Of the five participants, three were native to Aceh, while two came from other provinces in Indonesia. This geographical variation was expected to provide a broader range of perspectives despite the participants sharing similar disaster experiences. To protect confidentiality, all participants were assigned pseudonymous codes (R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5) throughout the analysis. Initial contact with participants was established through networks of affected students, and participation was entirely voluntary.

Data were collected using three complementary techniques to ensure comprehensive and credible findings through data source triangulation (Patton, 2015). The trustworthiness

of the data was established through member checking, peer debriefing, and maintaining an audit trail.

The primary data collection method consisted of face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews. The main research instrument was an interview guide adapted from the Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE) developed by Pargament and colleagues (Pargament, Feuille, & Burdzy, 2011). The adaptation involved translating the instrument and contextualizing its theoretical constructs into open-ended questions that reflected the Indonesian cultural context and the experiences of Muslim university students affected by flood disasters.

The interview guide was organized around the five core dimensions of the RCOPE framework (Pargament, 1997):

1. Meaning – Exploring how participants interpreted the flood disaster from an Islamic religious perspective.
2. Control – Examining how participants balanced prayer, personal effort (*ikhtiar*), and *tawakkal* (trust in Allah).
3. Comfort – Investigating the effectiveness of religious practices in providing emotional relief and inner peace.
4. Intimacy – Exploring the role of spiritual support exchanged within religious communities and interpersonal relationships.
5. Life Transformation – Identifying significant personal changes and the role of religion in regulating emotions following the disaster.

Each dimension was operationalized into specific indicators, interviewer prompts, and open-ended interview questions, as presented in Table 3.1. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes, was audio-recorded with participants' consent, and was supplemented with detailed field notes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

The participants in this study consisted of five active undergraduate students at Malikussaleh University who were directly affected by the flash flood disaster and met the study's inclusion criteria. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. To ensure confidentiality and adhere to research ethics, each participant was assigned an identification code to maintain anonymity. A brief profile of the participants is presented in Table 4.1 below.

Tabel 4.1. Characteristics of the Study Participan

Participant Code	Gender	Region of Origin	Faculty/Study Program	Primary Flood-Related Impacts Experienced
P1	Female	Outside Aceh	Psychology	Boarding house flooded; personal belongings and academic materials were damaged; required to evacuate.
P2	Male	Aceh	Engineering	Boarding house flooded; loss of electronic devices; disruption of basic utilities (water and electricity).
P3	Female	Aceh	Medicine	Severe damage to residence; trauma associated with rainfall; disruption of academic activities.
P4	Female	Outside Aceh	Social and Political Sciences	Boarding house flooded; social isolation due to loss of communication with family; severe psychological distress.
P5	Female	Aceh	Agriculture	Damage to the home environment; involved in post-flood clean-up activities; anxiety about the possibility of recurrent flooding.

Thematic Findings

Based on the thematic analysis of interview transcripts, observations, and documentation, five major themes emerged representing the Islamic religious coping strategies employed by the participants. These themes correspond to the dimensions of the Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE), which served as the conceptual framework for this study.

1. Meaning-Making in Response to the Flood Disaster

All participants (5/5) consistently interpreted the flood disaster as a test (ibtila') or divine decree (qadha') from Allah SWT. This interpretation functioned as an adaptive cognitive mechanism that transformed the perception of the disaster from an arbitrary stressful event into one with a divine purpose, thereby making it more acceptable and psychologically manageable.

"I interpreted the flood as a test from Allah. When my boarding house was flooded and I had to evacuate to the university auditorium, I tried to accept the situation patiently and believed that every hardship contains wisdom." (P1)

"...It was a trial from Allah, intended to test our faith... and also to remind us that our lives in this world are only entrusted to us by Allah SWT." (P2)

The participants' belief in the absolute power of Allah (qudratullah) served as the primary lens through which they interpreted their material losses. Property damage and financial losses were perceived not as the end of everything but as part of a greater divine plan.

"Faith in Allah's power helped me accept the damage and losses. Although I lost many belongings and felt uncomfortable in the evacuation shelter, I tried to remain sincere and focused more on my safety than on what I had lost." (P1)

Nevertheless, participants also experienced internal struggles when confronted with narratives that associated disasters with personal sins. Some initially questioned themselves but eventually redirected these thoughts toward constructive self-reflection rather than excessive self-blame.

"When the flood happened, I initially associated it with my own mistakes or sins, which made me anxious. However, I tried to use the experience as an opportunity for self-reflection without blaming myself excessively." (P1)

"...I think it's better to stay silent." (P2, responding to people who associated the disaster with the sins of others)

The finding that participants interpreted the flood as a test from Allah not only demonstrates the use of positive religious coping, but also illustrates how the Islamic belief system provides an interpretive framework through which suffering can be understood in a meaningful way. Within the Acehnese context, where religious values are deeply embedded in everyday life, narratives concerning divine trials, destiny, and wisdom appear to function as shared cultural resources that help students reduce uncertainty and existential anxiety following disaster. These findings extend Pargament's theory by suggesting that the meaning-making function of religious coping is not solely an individual cognitive process but is also shaped by the broader cultural and religious context in which individuals live.

2. Control through Partnership with God and Personal Effort

The coping strategies identified within this dimension demonstrated a dynamic and context-dependent pattern. Rather than adopting a passive deferring coping style, participants predominantly engaged in collaborative religious coping, whereby personal effort (ikhtiar) and trust in Allah (tawakkal) operated simultaneously, with the relative emphasis on each shifting according to situational demands.

During the acute phase of the disaster—when the flood was occurring and immediately afterward—the tendency toward self-directing coping became more evident. Participants perceived that they had to make rapid decisions and take immediate action to

ensure their physical safety.

"When my boarding house was flooded and I had to evacuate immediately to the university auditorium, I felt that I had to rely on my own abilities and judgment to save myself and my belongings because everything happened so quickly and there was no time to wait for help." (P1)

After the emergency phase had passed and the situation became more manageable, participants' coping strategies shifted toward achieving a balance between personal effort and surrender to God. They consciously allocated different "proportions" to prayer, active effort, and reliance on Allah.

"In dealing with the flood, I continued to pray while taking practical actions. However, during the emergency, I relied more on my own efforts because the situation required immediate action. Only after the situation became more stable did I fully surrender the outcome to Allah." (P1)

"We also have to make an effort. We still have to eat, we still have to live, and we must not give up. For example, we looked for places where electricity was available so we could contact our parents. We did not do it alone—we stayed together with our friends." (P2)

The concept of tawakkal (trust in Allah) was not interpreted as passive resignation but rather as surrender following maximum personal effort. This pattern reflects the Islamic understanding of tawakkal as an active rather than passive form of reliance on God.

"Of course, I never neglected my five daily prayers. During the flood, although we were affected, there was very little we could do. We did not even have proper food or electricity. Therefore, besides praying, we also had to place our trust completely in Allah." (P2)

3. Seeking Comfort through Religious Rituals and Closeness to Allah

Within this dimension, all participants reported engaging in individual religious practices as their primary source of emotional comfort and a means of regulating negative emotions following the disaster. These practices—particularly shalat (prayer), dhikr (remembrance of Allah), and personal supplication (dua)—functioned as forms of religious emotion-focused coping.

These religious activities served two primary functions. First, they distracted participants from anxiety by redirecting their attention toward Allah. Second, they provided a safe avenue for expressing fear, confusion, and hope.

"I usually recite dhikr and perform shalat to reduce my anxiety. Praying, sending blessings upon the Prophet, and maintaining positive thoughts help relieve my anxiety very quickly and make my heart feel much calmer." (P4)

"Shalat is what brings me the greatest sense of peace because afterward my heart feels much calmer." (P5)

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal a more nuanced and realistic picture. Several participants acknowledged that although religious practices provided comfort, feelings of fear and anxiety did not disappear completely. This suggests that religious coping functions as a source of psychological support rather than as an instant solution that eliminates all emotional suffering.

"When I felt anxious because of the flood, I prayed and recited dhikr, but the sense of calm I experienced was not yet completely stable." (P1)

"Prayer and worship helped me feel somewhat calmer, but while staying in the evacuation shelter I still often experienced anxiety." (P1)

An interesting finding concerns the qualitative change in participants' relationship with Allah. The flood disaster appeared to intensify their sense of closeness to God, making their personal prayers more intimate and emotionally expressive. Participants reported feeling freer and more honest in communicating their deepest emotions.

"In my personal prayers, I expressed my fear and confusion to Allah, even though I did not yet feel completely at peace." (P1)

"With every prayer and every request for forgiveness, I feel closer to Allah. The more we believe that Allah will help us through every trial, the stronger our faith becomes." (P2)

"I feel much closer to Allah now. I pray more often, and my prayers have become more honest—almost like talking directly to Him." (P5)

These findings further indicate that religious coping does not necessarily produce immediate psychological relief. Although prayer, worship, and dhikr helped alleviate anxiety, participants continued to experience fear and emotional distress to varying degrees. This suggests that religious coping functions primarily as a psychological resource that enables individuals to endure adversity and gradually adapt, rather than as a mechanism that directly eliminates psychological distress. Consequently, participants' religious experiences illustrate the complex interplay between spiritual acceptance and ongoing emotional struggles during post-disaster recovery.

4. Intimacy and Support from Religious Communities

This theme highlights the social dimension of religious coping, demonstrating that it encompasses not only a vertical relationship with God but also horizontal relationships with other people. Participants both received and provided spiritual support within their

religious communities on campus, which functioned as an important social resource for strengthening psychological resilience. Support was manifested in two primary forms:

a. Emotional and Spiritual Support.

This form of support included encouraging one another, offering reassurance, and sharing religious advice that fostered hope and emotional comfort.

"I encouraged fellow flood survivors by reminding them to remain patient, continue praying, and believe that this was a test from Allah with wisdom behind it." (P1)

"At the very least, we invited each other to worship together. Simply staying together already gave us encouragement." (P2)

b. Instrumental and Practical Support

Participants also received tangible assistance, such as help cleaning flooded boarding houses, the provision of daily necessities, and regular inquiries about their well-being. These actions were perceived as concrete expressions of care that reduced both practical burdens and feelings of isolation.

"My friends, student organizations, and religious leaders offered prayers and advice that made me feel stronger and less alone." (P1)

"They genuinely accepted me and immediately reached out to help when they found out that my boarding house had been flooded. They even offered to help clean and restore my room." (P4)

Religious communities—including fellow Muslim students and Islamic student organizations—served as a surrogate family, particularly for participants who came from outside Aceh and were separated from their families during the disaster. The presence of these communities emerged as a significant protective factor.

"Alhamdulillah, having them around really eased my burden. Since my family was not here, they became my substitute family." (P4)

However, the findings also revealed differences in participants' receptiveness to religious support. Some recognized that not everyone was emotionally prepared to receive religious advice while experiencing trauma, suggesting that the effectiveness of spiritual support depends on individual readiness and contextual sensitivity.

"There are two types of people. Some are willing to accept religious reminders, while others are uncomfortable when the conversation is immediately linked to the afterlife." (P4)

5. Life Transformation Following the Disaster

The final theme illustrates the long-term positive changes (post-traumatic growth) experienced by participants as they coped with the disaster through Islamic religious practices. Rather than viewing the flood solely as a source of suffering, participants perceived it as a catalyst for personal and spiritual development. The most consistently reported changes included the following:

a. Increased Patience and Gratitude

Participants reported becoming more patient, more appreciative of life's simple blessings, and less inclined to complain.

"I have become more patient, appreciate small things more, and complain less. I have also learned to accept difficult situations and think more positively whenever I face problems." (P1)

"I have become more grateful, more patient, and better able to regulate my emotions." (P5)

b. Changes in Life Perspective and Priorities

The disaster encouraged participants to reflect more deeply on the meaning of life, their dependence on Allah, and the importance of preparing themselves for future uncertainties.

"My perspective on life has changed considerably. I now try to prepare myself for every possibility, especially by strengthening my faith." (P2)

"Life does not always unfold according to our expectations. We have learned to go through everything more calmly and sincerely." (P4)

c. Improved Emotional Regulation through Islamic Teachings

Participants actively employed Islamic teachings as cognitive frameworks for regulating difficult emotions such as anger, disappointment, and fear. Concepts such as ikhlas (sincere acceptance), ridha (contentment with Allah's decree), and tawakkal (trust in Allah) functioned as psychological resources that helped alleviate emotional distress.

"Religious teachings have greatly helped me manage difficult emotions such as anger, disappointment, and fear. By praying and reminding myself that everything happens by Allah's permission, I feel much calmer." (P1)

"By remaining grateful and continuously praying and worshipping Allah, I have been able to regulate my emotions better and avoid excessive anger, disappointment, and fear after the flood." (P4)

These changes suggest that religious coping functions not only as a means of healing emotional wounds but also as a mechanism for building psychological strength, enabling individuals to grow and discover new meaning after experiencing adversity.

2. Discussion

The discussion relates the five thematic findings to the theoretical framework and previous studies presented in Chapter II.

Discussion of Findings Based on the Religious Coping Theory

The findings strongly support and extend the religious coping theory proposed by Pargament and colleagues (Pargament et al., 1998). All five dimensions of the Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE)—meaning, control, comfort, intimacy, and life transformation—were clearly reflected in the lived experiences of Muslim university students affected by the flood disaster.

1. Meaning-Making as the Foundation of Coping

The predominance of interpreting the flood as a divine test or Allah's decree is consistent with Nurwanti's (2019) findings, which demonstrated that disaster survivors in Indonesia predominantly employ positive religious coping through religious acceptance. This interpretation represents an adaptive form of primary appraisal, transforming the disaster from a threatening event into a spiritually meaningful challenge, thereby reducing feelings of helplessness (Pargament et al., 1998).

2. Active Partnership in Maintaining Control

The collaborative religious coping pattern identified in this study—characterized by balancing *ikhtiar* (personal effort) and *tawakkal* (trust in Allah)—indicates that participants did not adopt a passive coping style. This finding supports the Islamic perspective that *tawakkal* does not represent fatalism but rather an active surrender to Allah after exerting one's maximum effort (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014). Consequently, these findings contribute important cultural nuance to Pargament's theory, which was originally developed within a predominantly Western context.

3. Religious Rituals as Mechanisms of Emotional Regulation

The use of *shalat* (prayer), *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), and personal supplication as sources of emotional comfort reinforces the findings of Sari and Fadhilah (2021) regarding religious coping among university students. Religious rituals function as structured coping mechanisms that restore a sense of order, strengthen spiritual connectedness, and facilitate emotional catharsis amid the uncertainty and disruption

following a disaster (Pargament, 1997).

4. Religious Communities as Sources of Social and Spiritual Strength

The central role of religious communities identified in this study supports the findings of Akmal et al. (2023) in Lhokseumawe. Religiously oriented social support (religious social support) appears particularly effective within highly religious communities because it validates individuals' beliefs while reinforcing the coping strategies they employ (Krause, 2006).

5. Disaster as a Pathway to Personal Transformation

Participants' reports of post-traumatic growth, including increased patience, gratitude, and emotional regulation, indicate that religious coping can facilitate positive psychological development following adversity. Such growth occurs when individuals successfully integrate traumatic experiences into their broader system of beliefs and construct new meanings from those experiences (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Islamic teachings concerning *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude), and *ridha* (acceptance of Allah's decree) provide a powerful meaning-making framework that supports this transformational process.

Implications for the Psychological Well-Being of University Students

The findings have several important practical implications for promoting the psychological well-being of university students following disasters.

First, the religious coping strategies employed by participants represent natural, culturally embedded sources of psychological resilience. Universities and counseling services should therefore recognize and strengthen these existing coping resources rather than overlook them.

Second, religious communities within the university play a crucial role in students' psychological recovery. Islamic student organizations and campus religious associations can be empowered to serve as community-based peer support and spiritual mentoring networks for students affected by disasters.

Third, the observed variation in participants' receptiveness to religious support suggests that counselors and mental health practitioners should adopt culturally sensitive approaches and avoid imposing religious interventions uniformly on all disaster survivors. Spiritual support should be tailored to each individual's beliefs, readiness, and psychological needs.

Fourth, both receiving and providing spiritual support within religious communities function as valuable social resources that strengthen psychological resilience through

reciprocal care and shared religious values.

Finally, religious coping should be understood not merely as a means of healing emotional suffering, but also as a process of building psychological strength, enabling individuals to develop new perspectives, greater resilience, and renewed meaning in life following adversity.

Overall, the five religious coping strategies identified in this study constitute an integrated psychological process that contributes to the development of resilience. Meaning-making enables students to accept the reality of the disaster; the active partnership between ikhtiar and tawakkal strengthens their sense of control; religious rituals facilitate emotional regulation; support from religious communities provides essential social resources; and life transformation promotes post-traumatic growth. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that Islamic religious coping functions not only as a response to stress but also as a dynamic mechanism for fostering resilience and facilitating psychological recovery in the aftermath of disaster.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Islamic religious coping functions not merely as a stress management strategy but as an integrated psychological mechanism involved in meaning-making, emotional regulation, strengthening social support, and facilitating post-traumatic growth. Within the context of Muslim university students affected by flood disasters, religious coping serves as an important pathway toward the development of resilience and psychological recovery.

These findings highlight the importance of considering religious dimensions in the development of psychosocial support services and mental health recovery programs for disaster survivors within higher education settings.

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